



European Crime Prevention Network

European Crime Prevention Monitor 2012/1

European cross-country crime statistics, surveys and reports

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Preface

This report is a start up of a series of European Crime Prevention Monitor reports published every six months, presenting information on crime situations and crime trends based on statistics, surveys and reports. This first report presents findings from different international cross-country crime statistics, surveys and reports. A summary of some data, reports and on the major findings is outlined and presented with a focus on the 27 European Member States where possible. The aim of this report is to provide a quick and substantial, but selected overview of the situation and trends on crime and crime prevention in European Member States from the perspectives of the used data and literature. Target groups are local, national and European practitioners and policy makers. This report does not claim to be exhaustive. There are more statistics, surveys and reports which were not considered for this report. The data used has been published elsewhere and is not originally collected by the EUCPN. However, the information used in this report is analysed and presented in accordance with the needs of the target groups and the strategy of the EUCPN.

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1. Introduction

What are the European developments on crime and crime prevention? This question is essential for knowledge-based crime prevention policy. Being able to rely on previous knowledge and an existing evidence base is therefore at the core for each Member State but also for the European Union level. Crime statistics are used to justify policies, to decide on measures of crime prevention and control and to make statements about the performance of the criminal justice system. Despite some methodological issues, these figures are still a major source of information. Self-reported crime or victim surveys originally intended to replace recorded crime statistics, complement them and add extra information to shed light on crime from different perspectives. Despite traditional discussions about methodological problems of such information gathering, crime statistics and surveys are still important to the present day. General methodological problems are certainly existing on the national level to which criminal statistics are normally related but even more when one tries to compare statistical figures produced in different countries.

Therefore, one has to bear in mind the importance of comparative data and pitfalls in its interpretation such as different data collection units, different definitions, differences in reporting, the countries' different legal systems, the countries' different policies (Lewis 2012; Tavares & Geoffrey 2010). International statistics are therefore by their nature difficult to compare and can only be regarded/used as the start of any comparative investigation. Many practitioners and policy makers are faced with overlapping mixed information based on results from a series of different sources. Due to the lack of reliable and generally comparable European statistical information on crime, the European Commission's DG Home Affairs (HOME) implemented a Statistics Action Plan 2011 – 2015 to measure crime and criminal justice (COM(2011) 713 final, 18.1.2012). This plan is part of the 2009 Stockholm Programme (Council (2010/C 115/01), 4.5.2010), aiming to create an open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens. It succeeded the Action Plan 2006 – 2010 (COM(2006) 437 final, 7.8.2006) which set the basis for an EU Strategy to get more valid and coherent data across the European Union.

The difficulties to overcome the above mentioned problems may have led to the fact that international comparative data in criminal justice are relatively scarce compared to other fields of public interest. However, there are now indications that an upturn of international research in criminology and among national and international policy makers is taking place. In view of an increasingly interlinked world and an ever converging Europe, not only economic and social comparable indicators are needed, but it is also necessary to compare the development of crime figures as well as criminal policies and criminal justice systems.



Comparative data on criminal justice are collected by several organisations and consortia at all geographical levels. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, but much can be learned from all of the data collected.

In this report details from four different statistics, surveys and reports for the European context are considered in more detail (Eurostat, International Crime and Victim Survey, International Self-Report Delinquency Study and Europol's OCTA). A systematic comparison of the different surveys is attached in Annex 1.

2. Methodology

The focus of the first report lies on existing cross-country surveys, statistics and reports that cover Member States of the European Union. Obviously, here are more surveys conducted and published on cross-country crime statistics in Europe (e.g. European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, Statistical Bulletin of the EMCDDA for drug related crimes, International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) by Heuni for specific type of violence, Crime Trend Survey by UNODC on selected crime types worldwide) or other initiatives. This report is a start-up of a series of European Crime Prevention Monitor reports presenting information on crime situations and crime trends. The aim of this report is to present different methods that are used to gain knowledge on crime. There is not one perfect method but rather all methods and results should be considered complementary. In this report data on recorded crime, victim survey data, self-reported crime and qualitative data is considered. It is aimed to focus on the 27 EU Member States where information is available. The report will be structured in different modules based on the following sources:

- a) Eurostat (for data on recorded crime)
- b) International Crime Victims Survey (IVCS) (for victim survey data)
- c) International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD) (for self-reported crime data)
- d) Europol's OCTA (for qualitative data)

During the analysis of the sources the incomparability of the different data will be taken into account. The conclusions will be a description of the different results in the European context. However, the chosen information in this report facilitates the dissemination of existing information on crime situations and trends supporting evidence based decision making on crime prevention.

3. Cross-country statistics, surveys and reports

3.1. Eurostat data

Eurostat publishes statistics of the European Union on crime and criminal justice systems from 1950 onwards for the total number of recorded crimes, and from 1993 onwards for a set of specific offences (homicide (also by capital cities/police areas in these countries), violent crime, robbery, domestic burglary, theft of a motor vehicle and drug trafficking). In addition, the database also includes statistics for prison populations from 1987 onwards and the number of police officers from 1993 onwards. The most recent data are from 2009. The data come from official sources in the countries such as the National Statistics Office, the National Prison Administration, the Ministries of the Interior or Justice and the Police.

Eurostat is the Statistical Office of the European Commission. It received a mandate under the 2004 The Hague Programme (Council (2005/C 53/01), 3.3.2005) to develop comparable statistics on crime and criminal justice. A series of measures were undertaken under the 2006 - 2010 Action Plan. As mentioned in the introduction the current Eurostat system will be enhanced and extended as part of the implementation of the 2009 Stockholm Programme. Justice and crime were not part of the EU acquis until the mid-1990s, so data has only been collected from Member States since then.

Currently data are collected on an annual basis from statistical experts nominated by the directors of Social Statistics (mainly from National Statistical Offices). Data collection covers the current 27 Member States; as well as the candidate and potential candidate countries, such as Albania, Croatia, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey; European Free Trade Association/European Economic Area (EFTA/EEA) countries, such as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein; other European countries, such as the Russian Federation; and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, such as Canada, Japan, New Zealand, USA and South Africa. Data are published annually as a Eurostat Statistics in Focus series. The most recent publication (June 2012) includes data for 2006–2009.

The methodology used in the publication of Eurostat draws upon what was developed by the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics¹, in particular the definition and measurement of criminal offences, and upon the

¹ European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics:
<http://www.europeansourcebook.org/index.html>



Surveys on Crime Trends conducted by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime².

Main findings³

Eurostat's collected data shows a decrease in the total number of crimes recorded by the police in the European Union since 2002 (figure 1). Until 2002, the trend was upwards. From then on it reversed and started slightly declining. This downward trend became even more pronounced from 2006 onwards, until in 2009 the total number of crimes recorded even dropped below the level of recorded total crimes at the start of the millennium.

When we take a look at the different types of recorded crimes, we can observe that the general trend for recorded offences regarding drug trafficking and – especially – violent crime has been a huge increase since 2000. At its highest point in 2005, the total average number of violent crimes recorded in the EU Member States was 35% higher compared to the number of violent crimes recorded in 2000. Since 2006, however, this number has been decreasing again but in 2009 the recorded violent crime offences still exceed the level of 2000 by 25%.

Over time, the other types of crime recorded – robbery, domestic burglary, homicide and motor vehicle theft – have all dropped below their level recorded in 2000. Looking at the details, it can be derived that for the EU as a whole, the total number of robberies first increased between 2000 and 2004, then stayed virtually at the same level of 2000 until 2006 before it started to decline quite rapidly. The average recorded homicides and motor vehicle thefts have been on a steady decline since 2000, whereas the recorded domestic burglaries have first dropped quite significantly between 2002 and 2004, then stabilised more or less until 2006 and finally started increasing again up until 2009.

² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/index.html>

³ The summary of the main findings is based on the report of Tavares & Geoffrey (2010) and Tavares et al. (2012); The findings presented consider only the police data from Eurostat.

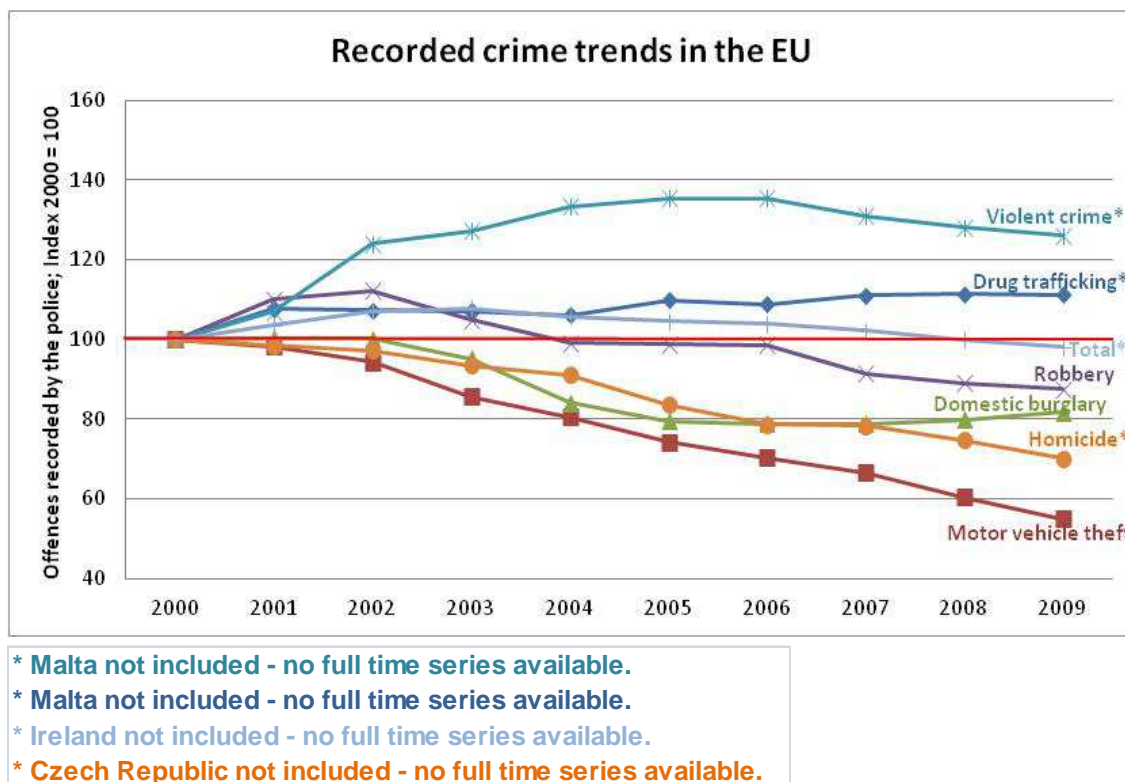


Figure 1: Recorded crime trends in the European Union

Source: Eurostat ([Eurostat \(crim_gen\)](#)) – own calculations

The countries where the decreases are most noticeable include the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France (not in Figure 1 but country details mentioned here can be found on the website of Eurostat). In some of the new Member States, crime rates peaked slightly later, but here also they are now decreasing. In a few southern countries such as Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Italy and Cyprus, crime rates have risen. There is also some indication among the Nordic Member States that, after a period of decreasing crime, the trend is now upwards.

Total crime

Total crime is referring to offences against the penal or criminal code. As mentioned before, the total number of crimes recorded by the police in the European Union rose to a peak in 2002 and has fallen steadily since. This tendency is particularly evident in some countries, such as the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands. Contrary, there has been an increase in recorded crime between 2002 and 2009 in Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. In Sweden, Denmark and Finland, where crime tended to decline in the first half of this period, it has been increasing for the period 2006 to 2009. Also Romania, Luxembourg and Portugal show a rise for the same period. The largest decreases between 2006 and 2009 have been documented in Malta, the United Kingdom, Greece, Poland and Cyprus.

Crime rates

The comparison of crime rates between countries has to be done with caution due to methodological restrictions such as different data collection units and legal definitions for crime types. Table 1 gives an overview of the crime rates for 27 EU countries. Sweden shows the highest crime rates from 2000 to 2009 (mean of 141 registered crimes per 1000 inhabitants). Cyprus showed the lowest rates (mean of 9 registered crimes per 1000 inhabitants) in the same period. The three Nordic countries Denmark, Finland and Sweden together have a mean of 104 crimes/1000 inhabitants, whereas the three Baltic States Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have a mean of 28 crimes/1000 inhabitants which is more than three times less. The other Eastern Member States Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia together also have a relatively low mean (29 crimes/1000 inhabitants). Compared to this the Western Member States Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and United Kingdom together have a mean rate of 71 registered crimes per 1000 inhabitants. The Southern member States Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain together have a mean of 37 registered crimes per 1000 inhabitants. Noticeable are the regional differences between North/West (mean = 88) and East/South (mean = 31) being almost three times higher.

GEO/TIME	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Belgium	98	94	98	97	97	95	97	96	96	97
Bulgaria	18	18	19	18	18	18	18	18	17	18
Czech Republic	38	35	36	35	34	34	33	35	33	32
Denmark	95	88	92	90	88	80	78	82	87	89
Germany (including former GDR from 1991)	76	77	79	80	80	77	76	76	74	74
Estonia	42	43	39	40	39	39	39	38	38	36
Ireland	19	23	27	26	25	25	25			
Greece	34	40	40	40	37	41	42	38	37	34
Spain	46	51	53	51	51	52	52	52	52	51
France (metropolitan)	64	69	69	66	63	62	61	58	57	56
Italy	39	38	39	43	42	44	47	50	45	44
Cyprus	6	6	7	10	10	10	10	10	9	9
Latvia	21	22	21	22	27	22	27	24	25	25
Lithuania	23	23	21	23	24	24	22	20	21	23
Luxembourg	53	52	59	58	59	55	55	59	58	66
Hungary	44	46	41	41	41	43	42	42	41	39
Malta	45	41	43	45	46	46	41	37	34	29
Netherlands	84	86	87	85	81	82	79	79	77	75
Austria	70	65	73	79	79	74	71	72	69	71
Poland	33	36	37	38	38	36	34	30	28	30
Portugal	36	36	38	40	40	37	38	38	41	40
Romania	16	15	14	13	11	10	11	13	13	14
Slovenia	34	38	39	38	43	42	45	44	41	43
Slovakia	16	17	20	21	24	23	21	21	19	19
Finland	88	83	84	85	85	83	79	83	83	81
Sweden	137	134	139	140	139	138	135	143	150	152
United Kingdom	97	103	111	110	104	102	99	90	85	78

Table 1: Crime rates in the European Union 2000-2009 (= number of recorded offences per 1000 inhabitants)⁴

⁴ United Kingdom refers to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as there were no population figures available for Scotland and Northern Ireland. No numbers available from Ireland for the period 2007 to 2009.

Source: Eurostat ([Eurostat \(crim_gen\)](#)) – own calculations

Homicide

Homicide is defined as the intentional killing of a person, including murder, manslaughter, euthanasia and infanticide. It excludes death by dangerous driving, abortion and help with suicide. Homicide is fairly universally reported because of its seriousness, and definitions vary less between countries than for some other types of crime. Hence, the figures may be regarded as more comparable between countries than for other types of crime. Unlike other offences, the counting unit for homicide is normally the victim (rather than the case). The figures suggest that Lithuania and Estonia have by far the highest incidence of homicides, with over six cases annually per hundred thousand inhabitants on average during the period 2006-2009. The only other countries reporting more than two cases a year per hundred thousand inhabitants were Finland, Bulgaria, Romania and Ireland, while the lowest rates (less than one per hundred thousand) were observed in Austria, Slovenia, Spain and Germany. Homicide rates for EU capital cities are typically rather higher than for the Member State as a whole. They generally follow the national trends, with the highest figures being recorded in Vilnius, Lithuania (on average almost 8 victims per 100 000 inhabitants) and Tallinn, Estonia (about 6 victims/100 000). As a general rule, national homicide rates dropped or remained stable.

Violent crime

Violent crime includes violence against the individual (like physical assault), robbery (stealing by force or threat of force) and sexual offences (including rape and sexual assault). The general trend since 2002 has been an increase for such offences, and remained noticeable in most countries in western Europe. This is particularly the case for the Nordic countries. However this was outweighed by a decline in the number of violent crimes in the eastern part of the European Union for the period 2006 to 2009, notably in Lithuania, Slovakia, Poland, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. Not all Member States use the standard definition which makes the analysis of this type of crime more difficult. However, general trends show a decline in the EU of about seven percent for the period 2006 to 2009. At the Member State level, the picture is mixed, with a significant increase in Cyprus, Denmark, Luxembourg, Greece and Sweden. Whereas in Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Poland and the Czech Republic a decrease has been noted.



Robbery

Robbery is a sub-set of violent crime, and is defined as stealing by force or threat of force, including such offences as mugging and bag snatching. Police recorded robbery offences have decreased in the EU by about 11 % since 2006. Significant rises were documented in Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Hungary, Sweden and Denmark. In Denmark this rise was most significant with figures which more than doubled. There were sharp drops in the figures in Romania, Latvia, Poland, Italy, Estonia, the United Kingdom, and Lithuania.

Domestic burglary

Burglary, defined as gaining access to a dwelling by force in order to steal goods, has been generally on the decrease since 2002. This tendency, which may be associated with improved security measures such as locks and alarm systems, has recently been especially noticeable in eastern European countries. In Poland and Estonia, for example, there were less than half as many burglaries in 2008 than in 2002, and France and the United Kingdom also experienced drops of at least a quarter. Recorded domestic burglary increased by about three percent on average in the EU in the period 2006 to 2009. In the majority of the EU Member States, there were rises of between 5% and 10%, with stronger increases (over 20%) in Denmark, Greece, Sweden and Romania. In a few countries such as Poland, Estonia, Malta and Cyprus, drops of more than 20% were recorded.

Theft of a motor vehicle

Theft of a motor vehicle refers to thefts of cars, motorcycles, buses, lorries, construction and agricultural vehicles. As with alarm systems for buildings, there have been numerous technical improvements in recent years in car security. This may explain the general trend for a decline in thefts of vehicles. The great majority of Member States recorded decreases of over 10% between 2006 and 2009. Between 2003 and 2009 in some eastern Member States the drops were extraordinary. A decrease of more than half in recorded thefts is reported in Poland and slightly less than 50% in Estonia, Bulgaria and Lithuania. In most western European countries the decrease tended to be nearer 20%. The outstanding exception to the general trend is Romania, where vehicle thefts more than doubled between 2003 and 2009. Noticeable increases have been recorded in Hungary, Greece and Cyprus, but for the European Union as a whole there was a decreasing trend.



Drug trafficking

Drug trafficking refers to illegal possession, cultivation, production, supplying, transportation, importing, exporting and financing of drugs operations. The recorded offences have generally been increasing steadily since 2002. This trend continued over the period 2006 to 2009. A majority of Member States recorded an increase of more than 10%. Nevertheless, there were tremendous decreases reported in Hungary and Germany and a somewhat lower decrease in Austria of around 12%. The total number of offences remained fairly stable, but there were considerable variations between countries. Strong increases were observed in Sweden, Romania and Slovenia. Less marked, but still substantial rises took place in Cyprus, Spain, Denmark, Greece and the United Kingdom (particularly in Northern Ireland).

3.2. International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS)

In the past decades crime victimisation surveys⁵ gained more attention as they provide data that is different from recorded crime such as victimisation, rates of reporting crime to the police, victim's experience with police, fear of crime, and the use of prevention measures (Van Dijk et al. 2007).⁶ The International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS)⁷ was initially set up in the 1980s by a range of criminologists to gather international comparable data beyond police records (Van Dijk et al. 1990). The ICVS took place in 1989, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004/2005 and 2010 and has evolved into a leading program fully standardised surveys looking at citizens' experience of crime in different countries. During the different rounds new countries joined the survey. Between 1989 and 2005 there have been five main rounds of the ICVS in which 140 surveys have been conducted. Over the whole period, more than 320,000 citizens in 78 different countries were interviewed by phone or in person about their experiences with victimisation and related subjects (Van Dijk et al. 2007).

⁵ For an overview of victimisation and insecurity surveys in Belgium, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain see Zauberman (2008).

⁶ A group of researchers started to work on an EU wide victimization study commissioned by Eurostat. See Van Dijk et al. (2010).

⁷ International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS) <http://rechten.uvt.nl/icvs/>



The European Survey on Crime and Safety (EU ICS) in 2005⁸

In 2004/2005 ICVS two surveys have been conducted. The first was the European Survey on Crime and Safety (EU ICS) covering the 15 old Member States of the European Union plus Poland, Estonia and Hungary under the lead of Gallup Europe and co-funded by the European Commission's Directorate General for Research and Technology Development (EUICS 2007). The second one was conducted outside Europe coordinated by the United Nations Interregional Criminal Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) in Turin, Italy. Both surveys covered together 30 countries at national level and 33 surveys in main or capital cities. In the following paragraphs just the trends for the EU Member States are outlined.

Trends in overall crime from EU ICS 2005

The comparison of the 2005 EU ICS rates with rates recorded in the earlier rounds of the ICVS for most countries indicates a general downward trend in victimisation by common crime⁹ across the EU since 1988. The mean victimisation rates of participating EU countries developed from 16.9 in 1988 to 21.6 in 1996. In 2000 it dropped slightly to 19.3, in 2004 the victimisation rate abruptly decreased to 14.9. The ICVS data has shown a steady decline between 1995 and 2005. It is reported that the victimisation of crime in Europe has dropped in 2005 to the levels of 1990.¹⁰ In the 15 countries, with the exception of Belgium, where data had been compared from previous rounds with the 2004 round, an decrease of victimisation was reported. For three Member States (United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland) the ICVS-based prevalence rates for 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2005 EU ICS show almost identical trends. Rates went up between 1989 and 1992, 1996 and subsequently decreased between 1996 and 2000.

The European crime victimisation pattern from 1988 to 2005 shows a clear increase between 1988 and 1996, the level of crime has dropped significantly, especially from 2000 on. More specifically, a drop in victimisation until 2005 have been reported in Finland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Poland, for which data are available since 1990, shows also a clear and consistent decreasing trend until 2005. Compared to other European countries, Poland has turned from a high crime victimisation into a medium crime victimisation country. Crime victimisation

⁸ This chapter is based on EUICS (2007).

⁹ 10 crimes are identified during all ICVS sweeps: car theft, theft from a car, theft of motorcycles, bicycle theft, burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, theft of personal property, sexual incidents and assaults and threats.

¹⁰ According to the report of EU ICS 2005 declining trends in common crime have also been reported in the USA, Canada, Australia and other industrialised countries.



trends in France are also fully in line with the European pattern. In comparison Sweden showed still a small increase in 2000, becoming a high crime country during that period. Between 2000 and 2004 Swedish crime victimisation dropped noticeably to the level of medium ranged countries. The only EU Member State where levels of crime have not shown a decline was Belgium. Belgium's victimisation rates was reported to be above the mean. In 1988 Belgium was still recorded by the ICVS as a comparatively low crime country. For Ireland no ICVS trend data were available (EUICS 2005, p.22).

The report provides also short country profiles for 17 Member States (based on in total eight indicators on crime).

- Overall victimization on 10 crimes
- Burglary as the quintessential crime against households
- Robbery as a typical violent crime
- Percentage of the population that has been in contact with drugs- related problems
- Victimization by hate crimes
- Police performance index
- Percentage of households having a burglar alarm installed
- Percentage of the population that prefers a prison sentence as punishment for a young recidivist burglar

Finally, the report provides information on crime prevention such as risk and fear of crime and preventive measures against burglary. We have combined the average percentages on the four 'prevention-indicators' of the countries where the data were collected in Figure 2.

Observing Figure 2, the first thing that strikes is the tremendous raise of preventive measures against burglary in the form of special door locks in households in the participating countries. The trend goes from no household reporting door locks in 1989 over 30 and 40% of them in the '90s to even 50% of the households in the sample having a special door lock in 2005. At the same time, burglar alarms seem a lot less common, with overall 'only' around 10% of the households reporting having one. This has been increasing – although very slightly – since 1992.

Feelings of risk and fear of crime have remained quite stable over time. The chances of a burglary (very) likely to happen over the next 12 months on average being estimated around 30% in each survey round.

Feelings of being (very) unsafe after dark in the local area slightly decreased from 26% in 1992 to 22% in 2000, then increased again to almost 30% in 2005.

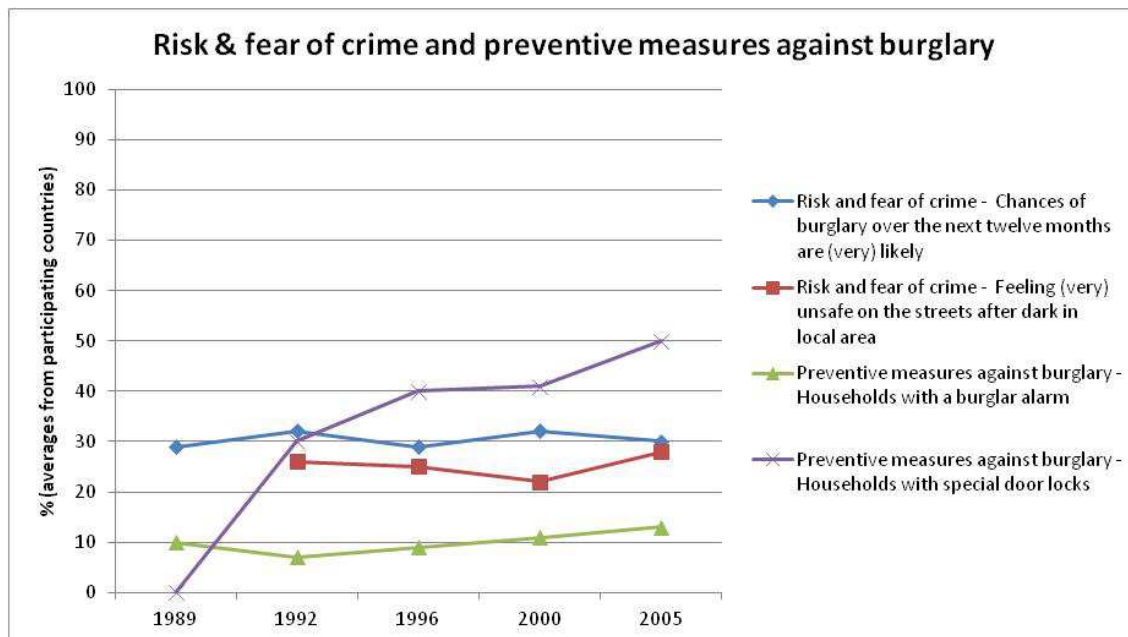


Figure 2: Risk and fear of crime and preventive measures against burglary (Based on figures in table C3.2 in EUICS 2005, p.117)

The ICVS 2010 - pilot¹¹

The ICVS 2010 pilot survey was granted under the European Commission's Prevention of and Fight against Crime 2009 programme.¹² It was conducted in six countries of which five from the European Union (the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark and Sweden). Although the aim of this pilot was *"to develop a cost effective methodology and tools for harmonized crime victims surveys in an international context [...]"* (Ghauharali et al. 2011, p.5), the results derived from the descriptive frequencies are particularly interesting for this report.

In the ICVS 2010 pilot the following ten crimes were perceived as common crimes: car theft, theft from a car, theft of motorcycles, bicycle theft, burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, theft of personal property, sexual incidents and assaults and threats. Victimization on these ten types of crime combined gives an overview of the overall victimisation rate. The 2010 pilot collected data from the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Canada. In total, 3500 or 4500

¹¹ This chapter is based on Ghauharali et al. (2011).

¹² European Commission's Programme on Prevention of and Fight against Crime: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/security-and-safeguarding-liberties/prevention-of-and-fight-against-crime/index_en.htm

respondents have been interviewed in each country, depending on the interview-method (via internet, telephone or paper) used.

Main findings ICVS 2010 - pilot

The main part of the ICVS 2010 pilot included questions on victimisation. Respondents were asked if they had been victim of several common types of crime. Figure 3 gives an overview of the one year prevalence victimisation rates on these common types of crime within each EU country that participated in the pilot study.

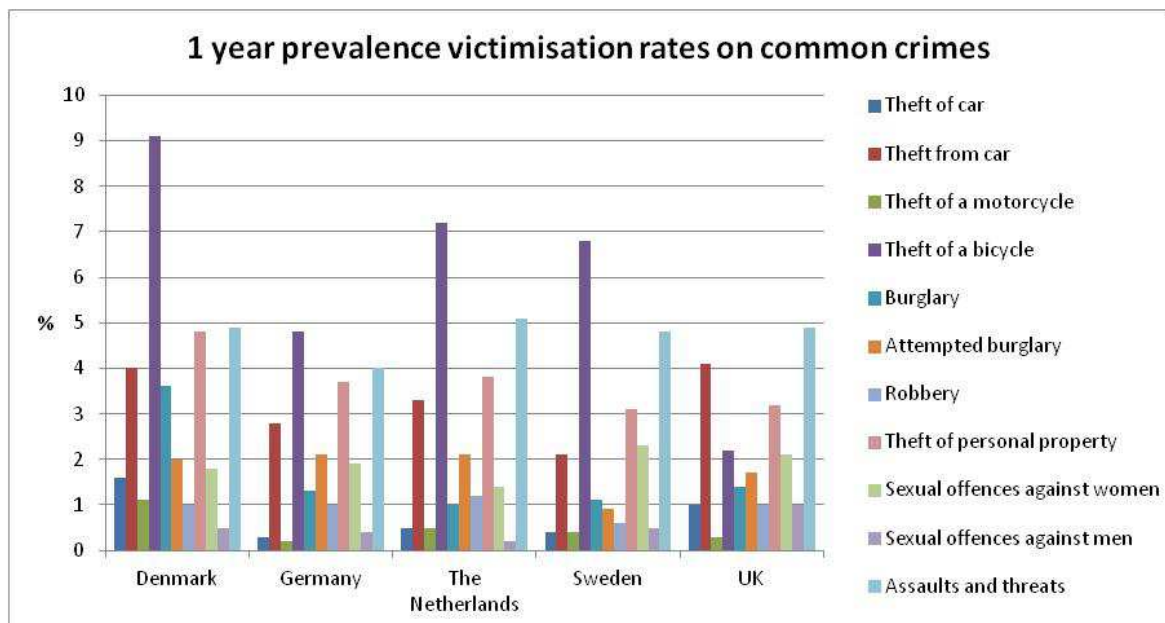


Figure 3: One year prevalence victimisation rates on common crimes (percentages)

Source: Based on figures in Ghauharali et al. 2011, p.24

First of all, it is important to note that all percentages shown in Figure 3 are below 10%. In order to give a clear overview of the results and to show the differences within and between the countries, they are presented this way. It is important to bear in mind, however, that – due to this presentation – seemingly 'large' differences in the figure are in fact small and possibly no (statistically) significant differences in absolute numbers.

Now focusing on the results: overall, Denmark shows the highest victimisation rates, followed by the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. The UK has the lowest rates.

Looking at the results within each country in more detail, it can be observed that in all countries, except the UK, being victim of a bicycle theft has the highest prevalence. In the UK, the victimisation rate is highest for assaults and threats,

which is also the common crime type with the second highest prevalence in the other participating EU-countries. Next, theft of personal property and theft from a car also show higher victimisation rates. The lowest victimisation rates can generally be observed for sexual offences against men and car or motorcycle theft. Finally, in Sweden the victimisation rates for robbery, attempted burglary and burglary all show very low prevalence as well, whereas these are slightly higher in the other countries, with a 'fair share' of almost 4% of Danish respondents who claimed to have been the victim of a burglary.

Table 2 presents the victimisation rates but for a five year period. The results are similar: Denmark has the highest overall victimisation rates and the UK the lowest; victimisation rates on bicycle theft and assault and threats still generally show a high prevalence, whereas the rates on sexual offences against men but also robbery are among the lowest. Denmark still scores quite high on burglary compared to the other European Countries.

	Overall victimisation for 10 crimes	Theft of car	Theft from car	Theft of a motorcycle	Theft of a bicycle	Burglary	Attempted burglary	Robbery	Theft of personal property	Sexual offences against women	Sexual offences against men	Assaults and threats
Denmark	57,3	6,9	15,9	16,8	28,9	11,4	6,8	2,9	15,8	5,4	1,9	12,5
Germany	44,5	1,5	13,8	3,9	18,7	5,4	6,2	2,9	14,5	6,6	1,5	12
The Netherlands	51,6	2,8	16,2	8,9	24,1	5,2	7,3	3,7	12,5	4,6	0,8	12,5
Sweden	47,2	3,3	13,4	6	21,7	3,7	3,6	2,2	12,7	7,6	1,4	13,4
UK	39,7	4,5	14,2	12,6	12,2	5,7	6,6	2,9	11,5	6,1	2,4	12,3

Table 2: Five year prevalence victimisation rates in countries (percentages)

Source: Ghauharali et al. 2011, p.25

Besides the victimisation rates the respondents' perceived feelings of safety have been measured as well. Figure 4 gives an overview.

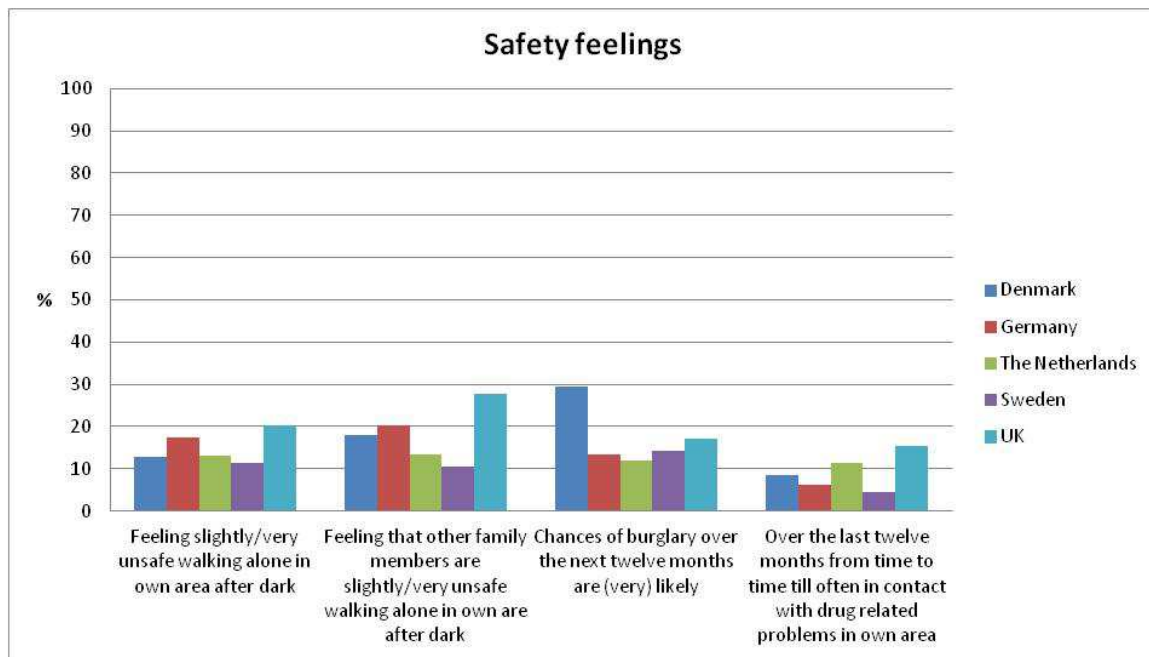


Figure 4: Safety feelings (percentages)

Source: Based on figures in Ghauharali et al. 2011, p.26

The first thing that can be noticed is that in general the greatest majority of respondents in all countries observed seem to feel rather safe about walking alone in their area after dark, either for themselves or their family members. Only in the UK – and almost similarly in Germany – one fifth of the respondents indicates they feel slightly to very unsafe walking alone in the dark, and almost 30% of the UK participants feel the same way about the safety of their family members. In the Netherlands and Sweden the proportion of respondents feeling (slightly or very) unsafe after dark is lower, 11% respectively 13%.

Next, when asked about the perceived chances of being a victim of a burglary over the next twelve months, especially Denmark stands out. About 30% of the Danish respondents thinks this is (very) likely to happen, compared to 20% or less (e.g. only 12% in the Netherlands) of the respondents in other countries. Looking back at the previous results on the victimisation rates, however, this seems hardly surprising.

Finally, around 90% or more of the respondents have not (or not regularly) been in contact with drug related problems in their area. Only in the UK and in the Netherlands, 15% respectively 12% of the respondents indicate they have been in contact with this type of crime from time to time or often.

3.3. International Self-Report Study (ISRD)¹³

The ISRD-2 study follows the first international comparative study of delinquency (ISRD-1) which was initiated in 1988 by the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC)¹⁴ of the Dutch Ministry of Justice. The study was conducted in 13 countries with the goal to describe the span of criminality of children and youth in the European context. The results of the surveys were published in two books (Junger-Tas et al 1994, 2003). Self-reported delinquency is measured by the following 12 offences: damaging on purpose, stealing, breaking into a building, theft of a bicycle, moped or scooter, theft of a motorbike or car, theft from a car, snatching a purse, bag or something else from a person, bearing of arms, threatening somebody, participating in a group fight, intentionally beating up someone, or hurting him, selling any (soft or hard) drugs. These have been grouped in property offences and violent offences, but also in minor and serious delinquency. 'Minor' offences are the most frequent offences, 'serious' offences are rarely occurring. The study includes information on key issues in juvenile delinquency such as victimization of young people, alcohol and drug use and its relation to juvenile crime, involvement in youth gangs, immigration, family and school and neighbourhood situations. Since 2011 the third data collection sweep was planned labelled as ISRD-3.¹⁵

Some remarkable results from ISRD-1¹⁶

Junger-Tas et al. (2010, p.425) summarise that, consistent with earlier results of the ISRD-1 and other studies on juvenile delinquency, "youths – if at all – predominantly commit minor crimes." Only a small number of offenders commit more serious or a large variety of crimes. Junger-Tas et al. outline that there is a difference between the former socialist countries and the rest of Europe with respect to property crimes, especially shoplifting. The prevalence rates in the cities in Central and Eastern Europe are lower than in cities in Western Europe and the Anglo-Saxon countries. Lifestyle and/or opportunity structures could play a crucial role in youth crime (for further elaboration see Wikström (2012)). Some countries find that students who report a higher level of offending are also those who report a higher level of victimisation (in particular theft, the most common victimisation) assault and extortion (not bullying). Different lifestyles are related to offending.

¹³ Based on Enzmann et al. (2010) and Junger-Tas (2010) with a focus on the participating European Member States.

¹⁴ Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (WODC) <http://english.wodc.nl/>

¹⁵ For more information see <http://webapp5.rrz.uni-hamburg.de/ISRD/JDEB/#Contents>

¹⁶ Based on Junger-Tas (2010).



For example, frequent outdoor activities such as going to disco's at night increases the risk of becoming a victim of assault and extortion. Bullying happens mostly at schools.

Use of alcohol and drugs

In most countries alcohol is no offence. In some countries even soft drugs like hashish and mariuana are no offence or are tolerated. One could pose the question if alcohol is a delinquency? A high level of consumption surely is a risk factor. In most countries it is part of normal day-to-day life, like e.g. in Spain and Italy at meals. There is only little report of getting drunk very often and delinquency. Many reports of group delinquency and drinking or using drugs are almost always recorded in a peer group. Youths who spend their free time at home report less crimes than juveniles who spend much time in public places. Nevertheless, they also just spent their leisure time in group. Just a small part consider themselves being member of a youth gang according to the definition used by Eurogang (Klein et al. 2001).

Gender differences

The findings confirm the observation that gender differences in self-reported studies are much smaller than in official data. There are more boys involved in violence and serious offences, but there are virtually no differences in shoplifting between boys and girls.

Migration and delinquency

Second generation immigrants tend to have higher delinquency rates that native born youth. But there are differences between types of crime. For example, Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands and Germany commit more non-serious violent crimes but are far less involved in shoplifting.

Some results from the ISRD-2¹⁷

The ISRD-2 surveys were conducted between 2005 and 2007 in 19 European Union countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia,

¹⁷ Based on Enzmann et al. (2010).

Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia.¹⁸ The ISRD-2 study is a school-based study including 12- to 15-year-old children conducted either at the city level or at the national level. This study is the first self-report survey that has been applied on such a large scale.

Total delinquency

The prevalence rates of total delinquency reported for the year before the survey show large variations with 40.1% at the highest end (Ireland) and Portugal (14.5%) at the lowest. Overall, the highest levels of prevalence were found in the cities of Anglo-Saxon countries (29.6%) and in the cities of Western European countries (26.3%). In Western Europe, The Netherlands (29.3%) and Germany (29.0%) score the highest, whereas Austria has the lowest rate (22.1%). Denmark leads the rates in Northern European cities with 26.5% prevalence rates, followed by Finland and Sweden. However, overall the rates in the cities of the Northern European countries (including Norway and Iceland) lie at 20.8%. The cities in Central and Eastern Europe show a similar prevalence rate of 20.6%. Cities in Hungary (27.0%) and the Czech Republic (24.5%) have the highest rates, whereas cities in Poland (16.3%) show the lowest rates of total delinquency reported. Overall, the lowest prevalence rates are reported in the cities of the Mediterranean countries (18.7%), the lowest rates being found in Portugal (14.5%) and the highest in Italy (25.6%).

Serious violent delinquency

With regard to more serious violent delinquency, Ireland, Germany and The Netherlands score the highest. Overall, the prevalence rates for serious violence are the lowest in Central and Eastern European countries. Usually, when prevalence rates between countries and offences are compared, it usually shows that the Anglo-Saxon countries (and particularly Ireland) show the highest level. An exception is the case of serious violence. According to the ISRD-2 survey the Anglo-Saxon countries also score high in versatility.¹⁹ Versatility is considered to be a better indicator for the level of delinquency than prevalence. With the exception of Italy and Spain the youth from the Mediterranean countries and the former socialist countries appear to be less involved in delinquency. They also show a lower level of

¹⁸ In addition the surveys were conducted in Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russia, Canada and the United States were represented by four states (Illinois, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Texas), also Aruba, the Netherlands Antilles, Suriname and Venezuela.

¹⁹ Versatility is defined in this survey as 'committing at least three different offences over the last 12 months'.



variety in their delinquent behaviour. The data suggest that the former socialist countries show lower rates for self-reported delinquency – and serious delinquency in particular – compared to the other regions.

Shoplifting

Generally higher prevalence rates of shoplifting for children and youth were found in more prosperous countries. Even though, in some of these countries, there has been a steady decline in this behaviour over the past years. In the more prosperous countries, technical surveillance and theft prevention systems have become more common. In some Central and East-European countries such as Estonia the use of security personnel in stores and small shops reduced shoplifting.

Victimization experiences

The ISRD-2 survey also draws attention to reported victimisation experiences. The average prevalence rates from former socialist countries lies in the range of all other European countries. Remarkable is that the prevalence rates on victimisation by assault are slightly higher for former socialist countries compared to these rates in the other country clusters. The highest rates for EU Member States are found in Estonia (6.8%), Poland and Germany (both 6.1%), the lowest in Belgium and Lithuania (both 2.8%), Finland (2.4%), Sweden (2.3%), Portugal and Spain (both 1.2%). Despite high rates of self-reported assault, the victimisation rate in Ireland (4.0%) is not particularly high. The fact that self-reported delinquency and victimisation data do not entirely match can be related to the fact that juveniles in the age between 12 and 15 may often be victimised by older offenders.

3.4. Europol's OCTA²⁰

Europol is publishing its Organized Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) since 2006. OCTA is a future oriented assessment of organised crime. Its aim is to support law enforcement efforts in the European Union (EU). The strategic report replaced the Organised Crime Report (OCR) which was primarily focusing on the description of the organised crime situation in Europe. The OCTA puts an emphasis on the qualitative assessment of this complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. The OCTA, is based on a qualitative assessment of organised crime and related phenomena. It is a document oriented towards the future, which assists decision makers to identify

²⁰ This chapter is based on OCTA 2011 EU Organised crime Threat Assessment
<https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/press/europol-organised-crime-threat-assessment-2011-429>



strategic priority areas in the fight against organised crime. In addition, the document helps to define operational targets by providing intelligence based analysis. OCTA is based on multiple sources such as information from other EU agencies or from the private sector and the European dimension is the major focus. The assessment identifies the most relevant crime phenomena from an European or wider regional perspective. The suggested priorities build the basis for more focussed assessments leading to detailed operational recommendations. Some of the major findings are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

Major findings OCTA 2011

Next to the general European focus, the OCTA (Europol 2011, p.6) also claims regional priority setting 'due to its geographical dimension and its cultural, social and historical differences'. Generally, the organised crime landscape is increasingly marked 'by highly mobile and flexible groups operating in multiple jurisdictions and criminal sectors' (Europol 2011, p.6). For example, commercial and passenger transport infrastructure such as supply chains by means of container shipments, air freight, light aircrafts and the internet are also used for trafficking illicit commodities. The known cooperation of specialists from economic sectors such as the financial, transport, real estate and pharmaceutical sectors is considered a facilitating factor. The recent global economic crisis and the connected financial restraints 'have made communities more tolerant of illicit commodities, especially counterfeit goods' (Europol 2011, p.6). In addition, due to the crisis, work of law enforcement agencies are restraint in their activities with negative consequences for society and policing. The OCTA refers to the internet technology as key facilitator for offline organised crime activity:

"In addition to the high-tech crimes of cybercrime, payment card fraud, the distribution of child abuse material, and audio visual piracy, extensive use of the Internet now underpins illicit drug synthesis, extraction and distribution, the recruitment and marketing of victims of trafficking in human beings (THB), the facilitation of illegal immigration, the supply of counterfeit commodities, trafficking in endangered species, and many other criminal activities. It is also widely used as a secure communication and money laundering tool by criminal groups."

(Europol 2011, p.7)



Drugs²¹

Concerning drug trafficking it is documented that container shipments are an important transport method for increasing 'poly-drug'²² traffickers. There is an emergence of 65 new synthetic drugs in the last two years. An enhanced informal economy of exchanging drugs for stolen goods, firearms or other drugs has been reported, making organised crime more invisible. For the future, an expansion of large scale indoor cannabis cultivation in the EU is predicted.

Facilitated illegal immigration

Due to international agreements and coordinated law enforcement activities the flows of illegal immigrants from the Mediterranean Sea route have been reduced in 2010. Southern Europe and in particular Greece is still the major illegal entry to the European Union from the sea routes. Next to that, the illegal entries through overland entries increased substantially along the border of Greece and Turkey. Counterfeit, forged and fraudulently obtained identity and travel documentation such as passports, visas and residence permits are procured by skilled specialists also from the legal business sectors such as shipping agencies or employment agencies. In case of absence of harmonisation of visa standards in the future e.g. for settlement for marriage or family reunion in the European Union, an increase of abuse of legitimate migration procedures is reported to be likely.

Trafficking in human beings

The internet use in the recruitment of victims and advertising services is fast growing and ensures anonymity for the criminals. This makes traditional techniques of police interventions more difficult. Counterfeit, forged or fraudulently obtained documents such as travel and identity documents are used by traffickers and victims preferably to travel by air into the EU. The victims are increasingly exploited in economic sectors such as construction, tourism, catering, nursing and domestic services.²³

²¹ Europol is collaborating with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) since 1997 on drug related issues.

²² 'Poly-drug' trafficking is referring to criminals that distribute different types of drugs instead of just one specific drug type.

²³ This new trend is accompanied by the 'traditional' fields of exploitation such as prostitution, begging and theft, textile and agricultural industry.



Fraud

Concerning fraud the OCTA states that there is 'an increasing proximity between organised crime groups and legitimate business structures' (Europol 2011, p.27). This is documented for missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud with high valuable portable goods such as mobile phones and computer chips.²⁴ But also for intangible commodities such as carbon credits emerge.²⁵ The internet plays a crucial role for fraudsters, for example to share knowledge and resources or for transactions from states outside the EU.

Cigarette smuggling

Cigarette smuggling is documented as a crime of increasing interest among criminals due to a low detection risk and high profits. Lucrative destination Member States are those with higher tax rates on tobacco.

Counterfeiting

Counterfeit products from outside the EU enter the EU via the major sea ports. The last few years a wider range of counterfeit products such as toys, medicines, deodorants, condoms, washing products, electrical items, food and beverages have been detected in the EU. Besides economic disadvantage of the legal business also a potential danger for health and safety emerged. It is reported that the EU citizens' social acceptance for counterfeits increased through the economic crisis and lower purchasing power, especially for illegal downloading from the Internet.

4. General trends at a glance²⁶

The data from Eurostat indicate a general decline in total police recorded crime in the European Union from 2002 on. The trends for violent crime and drug trafficking are increasing since 2000 whereas motor vehicle theft, homicide, robbery and domestic burglary show a decreasing trend (although since 2007 domestic burglary

²⁴ A wide range of goods is involved in VAT fraud constructions such as railway vehicle components, scrap metal, new and used cars, precious metals, footwear, Renewable Energy and Renewable Obligation Certificates, mobile phone credits and metal allocations.

²⁵ Carbon credit fraud is the purchase of CO2 emission quotas from countries not liable to VAT on these transactions. The credits are then sold in countries liable to VAT with the aim to reclaim the VAT amount payable to the country in question.

²⁶ For a complete overview it is recommended to consult the full reports and literature to be found in the reference list.



is slightly increasing again). There are significant regional differences for the crime rates between North/West (mean = 88 recorded crimes per 1000 inhabitants) and East/South (mean = 31 recorded crimes per 1000 inhabitants).

The results of the International Crime and Victimization Survey (ICVS) also showed a drop in crime victimization across European countries since the start of the millennium.

Moreover, the ISRD-1 surveys showed that juveniles predominantly commit minor crimes. Only a small amount of offenders commit more serious or a large variety of crimes. The ISRD-2 demonstrated that the prevalence rates of total delinquency vary largely between the Member States. For serious violent delinquency Anglo-Saxon countries score highest and former socialist countries lowest.

Finally, the OCTA showed that the internet became a major facilitator, not only for online crimes but also for the traditional 'offline' crimes. The legal economic sectors are increasingly involved in through specialists with certain expertise working in the sectors that facilitate (organised) crime. Commercial and person transport infrastructure is increasingly used for criminal activities.

5. Note on comparison

It should be recognised that the data and reports presented in this document do not pretend to provide a full description of the extent of crime in Europe. They have to be read complementary. Concerning police recorded crimes, there are some issues that have to be taken into account such as:

- Different legal and criminal justice systems
- Countries' definitions of crimes
- Methods of reporting
- Data collection units in use
- Proportion of reported or unreported crimes

For police recorded crimes it is at the moment not possible to make direct comparisons of crime types and levels between countries in the EU. As Van Dijk (2010, p.633) puts it:

"There are variations defining, recording and counting crime and the extent to which victims choose to involve the police. Police figures are strongly affected by the scale and effectiveness of policing activities. This influences the amount of records and influences the trend data by policing efforts and priorities."



From the data and reports presented here, it seems that comparisons should be based upon trends in time rather than upon absolute numbers, assuming that the characteristics of registration systems within a country in general remain fairly constant over time. Enzmann et al (2010, p.170) outline:

"... current 'best practice' when using international data sources is to avoid making direct comparisons between absolute figures, but instead use relative comparisons or use these data to study trends."

In the academic discourse there seems to be a growing consensus that there is a certain level of convergence between survey data and official crime recorded data (e.g. Wittebrood & Junger 2002, Robert 2009, Zauberman 2009). A standardisation across Europe could be helpful to get more valid results from the police data collection. Examples from the IVCS and the ISRD show that a large-scale comparison is possible through standardised measure instruments, translated where necessary, and through the use of common definitions.

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Annex 1: Summary characteristics of four datasets

	Eurostat data	ICVS 2010	ISRD-2	Europol OCTA
Institution conducting the study	Eurostat	Researchers	Researchers	Europol
Funding organisation	European Commission	European Commission	National Institutions	Europol
Main Focus	Police records	Victim data	Self-reported delinquency data of 12–15 year-old students	Police data
Methodology	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative	Qualitative
Delinquency measured	Total crime, homicide, violent crime, robbery, domestic burglary, theft of a motor vehicle and drug trafficking	Car theft, theft from a car, theft of motorcycles, bicycle theft, burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, theft of personal property, sexual incidents and assaults and threats	Damage on purpose, steal something, break into a building, steal a bicycle, moped or scooter, steal a motorbike or car, steal something out of or from a car, snatch a purse, bag or something else from a person, carry a weapon, threaten somebody, participate in a group fight, intentionally beat up someone, or hurt him, sell any (soft or hard) drugs	Drugs, facilitated illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings, fraud, cigarette smuggling, counterfeiting, weapons trafficking, organised property crime, environmental crime, money laundering
Measurements	Recorded crime, police officers, prison population	Victimisation data, fear of crime, crime prevention measures	Self-reported crime data, victimization data, alcohol and drug use, involvement in youth gangs, immigration, family and school, neighbourhood situations	Serious crime information, organised crime groups information
Geographical coverage	Data collection covers the current 27 EU Member States; candidate and potential	Six countries: 5 EU Member States: the DK, DE, NL, SE, UK; Canada	31 countries: 19 EU Member States: AT, BE, CY, CZ, DK, DE, EE, ES, FI,	27 EU Member States + other international regions and countries



	candidate countries: Albania, Croatia, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey; European Free Trade Association/European Economic Area (EFTA/EEA) countries: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein; Russian Federation; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries: Canada, Japan, New Zealand, USA, South Africa		FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI; other countries: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russia, Canada, US (four States: Illinois, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Texas), Aruba, Netherlands Antilles, Suriname, Venezuela	
Sample		2000 persons had been interviewed in most countries and 800 in main cities (over the years 140 surveys have been conducted with more than 320,000 citizens in 78 different countries)	71400 persons, 62 large or medium sized cities, 16 small town towns	
Frequency	Annual	1989, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004/2005 and 2010 pilot	Irregular, ISRD-1 in 1992, ISRD-2 surveys were conducted between 2005 and 2007, ISRD-3 in 2011 planned	Bi-annual
Key publications	Tavares, C., Geoffrey, T. & Bulut, F. (2012). Crime and Criminal Justice. Statistics in focus, 6/2012. Eurostat. European Union. Tavares, C. & Geoffrey, T.	Van Dijk, J., Mayhew, P., van Kesteren, J., Aebi, M. & Linde, A. (2010). Final report on the study on crime victimisation August 2010. Tilburg: INTERVICT/PrismaPrint.	Junger-Tas, J., Marshall, I.H., Enzmann, D., Killias, M., Steketee, M. & Gruszczynska, B. (eds) (2012) <i>The Many Faces of Youth Crime, Contrasting Theoretical perspectives on Juvenile</i>	Europol (2011). <i>OCTA 2011 – EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment</i> . The Hague: Europol. Europol (2009). <i>OCTA 2011 – EU Organised Crime Threat</i>



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